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Be someone's snow angel

City, province want more Winnipeggers to help elderly and disabled with winter shovelling

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Violence kills hundreds in South Sudan

Political crisis in world's newest country

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A pair of shoes and a pile of clothes can be seen at the spot where a man was found behind the United Way building on Main Street early Wednesday. He later died in hospital. SHANE GIBSON/METRO

Man dies after being found in frozen alley

'Absolutely this is tragic.' 55-year-old had been outside for hours in temperatures that fell to -27 C overnight



SHANE GIBSON
shane.gibson@metronews.ca

The man found lying in the freezing cold on Main Street early Wednesday has died.

Police were called after a passing driver noticed the man lying in the west rear lane of the 500 block of Main Street, near the United Way building, around 5:30 a.m.

The 55-year-old man was taken to hospital in critical condition, where he later died.

Police wouldn't speculate on whether or not the man was homeless, but spokesperson Const. Eric Hofley did say he had been listed as having no fixed address in their records.

"Absolutely this is tragic," said Hofley. "This incident happened to occur in an alley at night ... who knows what might have happened had he been found sooner."

Temperatures fell to as low as -27 C with the wind chill overnight, according to Environment Canada, and police said the man had been outside for hours before he was found.

Police are waiting for autopsy results to say whether or not he froze to death.

"Whether it was strictly cold or whether he had a medical emergency and collapsed, we don't know that yet," said Hofley, noting he also wasn't sure whether a pile of winter wear and a pair of shoes that remained at the scene had been taken off by the man before he died or whether EMS workers had taken them off.

Police do not suspect foul play in the death, and will not release the man's name.

Quoted

"We always talk about dressing for the weather, but, unfortunately, not all of us have that luxury."

WPS spokesperson Const. Eric Hofley

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Angels, grab your shovels

Helping hand. Residents are encouraged to shovel snow for those neighbours who can't



SHANE GIBSON
shane.gibson@metronews.ca

The city and province want to see more Winnipeggers pitching in to help their older neighbours and those with disabilities with snow clearing this winter.

Mayor Sam Katz and Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors Sharon Blady officially kicked off Age Friendly Winnipeg's new Snow Angel program Wednesday.

"It's something a lot of people are already doing, but we want to encourage more people to do it too," explained Katz. "It's a small thing that means so much to those who need it."

Already happening in other snowy cities like Calgary and Edmonton, the initiative asks people to keep an eye out for neighbours who could use a hand shov-

elling driveways and sidewalks.

The random act of kindness is one that Riley LeBlanc, 16, has already been practising this winter, and he has yet to find a homeowner not willing to take him up on the offer.

"Everyone says, 'Yeah, sure, go ahead, knock yourself out,'" he laughed. "I do it just to help them if they look like they can't do it themselves."

Eighty-two-year-old Peggy Prendergast's home is on LeBlanc's list of residences to shovel when the white stuff falls, and she said the help allows her to get out and about and have others come over even when the snow piles up.

"I couldn't get in or out without it," she said, noting it's not just young people who can become Snow Angels. "I've got a neighbour across the street, Bob Smith, who's been doing it for years — and he's 84!"



Follow Shane Gibson on
Twitter @tsygibson



Riley LeBlanc, 16, shows how to be a Snow Angel following the launch of the program that aims to encourage Winnipeggers to shovel sidewalks and driveways for older neighbours and those with disabilities. SHANE GIBSON/METRO

1 NEWS

Premier knew 'early on' of minister's lie

Manitoba's opposition parties are calling for an inquiry and the ousting of an NDP MLA from caucus after Premier Greg Selinger admitted he knew for months that a former cabinet minister misled the legislature.

Selinger told The Canadian Press he knew "early on" that former immigration minister Christine Melnick had likely misled the chamber in the spring of

2012, but he did not make that information public.

Manitoba's ombudsman found the assistant deputy minister of immigration was following Melnick's direction when he sent out a controversial email inviting immigration agencies to a politically charged debate in the provincial legislature.

Melnick — who has since been dropped from cabinet

Quoted
"Christine Melnick and the premier should have been forthright right from the start."

Liberal MLA Jon Gerrard

— told a legislative committee she wasn't behind the email at the time.

She issued a short written apology last week.

Conservative Leader Brian Pallister said Selinger should have corrected the record once he found out.

"The premier knew 18 months ago that his minister had lied about his government's attempt to involve the civil service in a partisan activity. That means that the premier was part and parcel of perpetu-

ating the lie for a year and a half," Pallister said.

The ombudsman's investigation found the bureaucrat didn't break any laws or guidelines when he sent an email in April 2012 that invited immigrants and newcomers to watch the NDP government debate a resolution condemning Ottawa for centralizing some immigration programs.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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'Economic vitality'. Folk Fest among nine groups to get federal funds

Manitoba festivals and art organizations will get a monetary boost from the federal government.

Shelly Glover, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, announced today that nine Winnipeg-based arts organizations have been chosen to receive money from the Canada Arts Presentation Fund.

"Our government is pleased to support these organizations," said Glover, who made the announcement at the Winnipeg Folk Festival Music Store.

"We recognize that the arts strengthen our communities and contribute to the cultural and economic vitality of our city and our province."

Lynne Skromeda, executive director of the Folk Fest, said the \$270,000 in funding will be a huge help to Winnipeg's iconic festival, and will go towards bringing in performers and musicians in the coming years.

"This funding allows us to continue to bring music to the lives of so many people in Winnipeg through our summer



Ryan Van Belleghem, a Manitoba born singer-songwriter, plays at the Winnipeg Folk Festival Music Store, before Minister Shelly Glover made the funding announcement.

CLARA BUELOW/FOR METRO

festival and year-round programs," said Skromeda.

The Fund gives money to cultural organizations across Canada. Over the next two years more than 540,000 people are expected to attend the different festivals and programming that these nine Winnipeg based organizations offer. CLARA BUELOW/FOR METRO

Dried up. Siloam Mission to reopen health centre after recent flooding

Siloam Mission is reopening their health centre only one week after water from a burst sprinkler system caused flooding.

The Saul Sair Health Centre will partially reopen on Wednesday, and will be fully operational on Thursday, one week to the day after the flooding.

Siloam Mission said in a

released statement they are thankful to the volunteers, patrons and local companies that have helped with the cleanup effort. "If it weren't for everyone pitching in the way they did, the physical damage to the property would have been so much worse," said Floyd Perras, Siloam Mission's executive director. ZACH PETERS/FOR METRO

Christmas cheer still needs help being spread

\$40,000 short.

Christmas Cheer Board short on cash and volunteer drivers

The Christmas Cheer Board is still in need of approximately \$40,000 and 200 volunteer drivers to make ends meet.

The Cheer Board, which delivers Christmas hampers to those in need across Winnipeg, expects to distribute between 18,500 and 19,000 hampers this year.

"Several thousand hampers still need to be delivered though," said Kai Madsen, the Cheer Board's executive director.

Last year 18,800 hampers were delivered, and the current shortfalls are based on a comparison of the same day last year with the same day this year, said Madsen.

The Cheer Board trusts that Winnipeggers will pull through and give their support.

"We always seem to manage," said Madsen. "But we have to make sure that we remind everyone that we're here and that we need their



Kai Madsen, executive director of the Christmas Cheer Board, stands amongst hampers that are ready to be delivered. Now all they need are volunteer drivers. ZACH PETERS/FOR METRO

input and assistance."

Madsen added that Winnipeggers are a giving group of people, and that they've proven this in past years.

"(Winnipeggers) are an awesome bunch, sometimes we don't give ourselves enough credit," said Madsen.

The Cheer Board aims to get all of the hampers out by the evening of Dec. 23, but Madsen said there are always a few stragglers to take care of on Christmas Eve morning.

Madsen, who's worked for the Cheer Board for the past 43 years, said he still

loves his work because he knows that his group is making a difference.

"I get that fuzzy, warm, good feeling, firstly about living in Winnipeg and secondly being a part of this whole process in a real meaningful way," he said.

ZACH PETERS/FOR METRO

Consolidation plan

Municipality amalgamation announced

Manitoba says it has amalgamated 14 municipalities under its controversial new plan to consolidate com-

munities with fewer than 1,000 residents.

Municipal Government Minister Stan Struthers says the amalgamations will cut administrative costs, allowing the province to put that money back into providing services.

The province says 85 communities are required

to submit an amalgamation plan.

The Association of Manitoba Municipalities is currently taking the province to court over its amalgamation plan, claiming the government is trying to dictate details of the mergers over the wishes of residents.

The government an-

nounced in November 2012 that it would require small municipalities to merge with neighbouring communities to save money and improve administration.

Struthers says the plan will cut the number of municipalities outside of Winnipeg by 30 per cent.

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Rescued crane operator suffers severe burns after massive fire

Kingston, Ont.

Authorities concerned damaged crane could come crashing down

A 68-year-old construction worker stranded atop a crane at the centre of a massive fire in Kingston, Ont., was "severely burned" before a military helicopter was able to navigate smoke and leaping flames to airlift him to safety.

Adam Jastrzebski, who had burns to his hands, legs, back and buttocks, was recovering in hospital Wednesday after his dramatic rescue a day earlier, said his employer at Canadian Professional Crane Inc.

"He's in severe pain right now in the hospital and they're giving him morphine," said Adam Malek.

"I'm just surprised no one got hurt more than that be-

cause the fire was enormous."

Firefighters from neighbouring communities had to be called in on Tuesday afternoon to help Kingston crews battle the flames which had engulfed an apartment building that was under construction.

A crowd watched from the streets as the crane operator got out of his cab, crept along the boom of the crane to its very edge and waited to be rescued by a team from CFB Trenton.

Meanwhile, authorities focused their attention Wednesday on the charred crane which towered above the still-smouldering remains of the building at the heart of the blaze.

"Right now our biggest risk is having that crane in its current condition," said Kingston fire chief Rheume Chaput. "It's been impinged by fire and is in a damaged condition. So we want to make sure we make that safe, get that down."

THE CANADIAN PRESS



Members of 424 Squadron, from left, Capt. Jean-Benoit Girard-Beauseigle, Master Cpl. Matt Davidson, Cpl. Iain Cleaton, Sgt. Cory Cisyk and Capt. David Agnew, pose for media at CFB Trenton on Wednesday. Inset: Sgt. Cisyk rescues a crane operator who was stranded at the end of his crane during a huge fire in Kingston, Ont., on Tuesday. LARS HAGBERG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Fatal disaster

Rail service resumes in Lac-Mégantic

Trains are rolling through Lac-Mégantic, Que., for the first time since last summer's deadly rail disaster.

Rail service resumed Wednesday in the town where a runaway train carrying crude oil derailed and exploded in July, killing 47 people.

The crash also destroyed part of Lac-Mégantic's downtown core.

Many locals are still trying to cope with the disaster and have mixed feelings about the train's return to the railway-dependent community.

Businesses along the railroad say the service is vital for the town's economy.

The first train arrived at the Tafisa Canada plant in the town's industrial park to pick up a load of particle board. While it was there, tests were carried out to ensure signals were functioning properly on its route out, which took it through the centre of the town.

The train headed to near-

by Sherbrooke after leaving the Tafisa factory.

The gradual return of freight trains to Lac-Mégantic must follow strict rules and conditions.

For now, no dangerous substances will be transported through the town, which is about 250 kilometres east of Montreal.

The track is still owned by Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway — the company at the heart of the disaster.

The insolvent railway is expected to be sold in the coming weeks.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Reporter drops suit against Ford

In a statement released on Wednesday night, Toronto Mayor Rob Ford has retracted statements he made about Toronto Star reporter Daniel Dale.

Dale responded on Twitter, saying he won't be proceeding with a defamation lawsuit against Ford.

The reporter says he appreciates Ford's "complete retraction and unqualified apology," and he's glad the truth is no longer in dispute.

Dale served Ford last week

with a libel notice, demanding he retract all of his false claims about what happened during an incident near Ford's house in May 2012 and issue an "unreserved, abject, complete apology."

During a televised interview with Conrad Black, which aired Dec. 9 on VisionTV, Ford claimed that Dale was in his backyard, "taking pictures of little kids" — a claim he has now retracted.

Dale says he won't be tak-

ing legal action against the mayor, and is looking forward to getting back to work.

Dale has said he was writing a story about a plot of public land adjacent to Ford's house that the mayor wanted to buy, so he went to take a look when the mayor emerged from his home to confront him.

The reporter has said that at no time was he on the mayor's property nor did he take any pictures.

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Ethnic violence kills 500 in four days as South Sudan crisis grows

Worries of looming civil war. UN chief calls for urgent solution as 20,000 forced to seek refuge

At least 500 people, most of them soldiers, have been killed in South Sudan since Sunday, a senior government official said, as an ethnic rivalry threatened to tear apart the world's newest country.

The clashes apparently are pitting soldiers from the majority Dinka tribe of President Salva Kiir against those from ousted Vice-President Riek Machar's Nuer ethnic group, raising concerns the violence could degenerate into a civil war.

Fighting spread on Wednesday to Jonglei, the largest state in South Sudan, where troops

loyal to Machar were said to be trying to take control of Bor, the state capital.

Machar himself is the subject of a manhunt by the country's military after he was identified by Kiir as the leader of an alleged coup attempt on Sunday. Machar has denied he was behind any coup attempt.

Barnaba Marial Benjamin, the foreign minister, told The Associated Press late Wednesday that there was heavy fighting in Bor, but he denied renegade soldiers had overtaken it.

At least 19 civilians have been killed in violence in Bor, said Martin Nesirky, a spokesman for the UN secretary-general's office, citing figures from the South Sudan Red Cross.

UN chief Ban Ki-moon told reporters Wednesday that South Sudan was experiencing a political crisis that "urgently needs to be dealt with through political dialogue." Ban said he urged Kiir "to re-



Civilians arrive at the UN mission in Juba, South Sudan, to take refuge on Tuesday. A political crisis has turned into ethnic violence resulting in the deaths of 500 and the displacement of 20,000. ROLLA HINEDI/UNMISS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

sume dialogue with the political opposition."

South Sudan has been plagued by ethnic violence

since it peacefully broke away from Sudan in 2011 after decades of civil war.

The violence has forced

about 20,000 people to seek refuge at UN facilities in Juba since Sunday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Analysis

Breakout still unclear

Casie Copeland, the South Sudan analyst for the International Crisis Group who is in Juba, said key Nuer leaders in the army were defecting in Jonglei but that "events that led to Sunday's fighting remain unclear."

Toby Lanzer, the UN's humanitarian co-ordinator in South Sudan, said in a Twitter post that thousands of civilians in Jonglei had sought refuge at a U.N. facility there.

On Tuesday the United States ordered its citizens to leave South Sudan immediately.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Morsi accused of plotting terrorism wave

Egyptian prosecutors on Wednesday announced a new trial of ousted president Mohammed Morsi and the top leaders of his Muslim Brotherhood, accusing them of conspiring with Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran's Revolutionary Guard and militant groups to

carry out a wave of terrorism to destabilize the country.

The charges, which carry a potential death penalty, are the most sweeping and heaviest accusations yet in a series of trials against the Brotherhood. The new trial of Morsi, the three top Brotherhood leaders and

32 other defendants appeared aimed at crippling the top echelons of the group and further tarnishing the Brotherhood among the public ahead of a key January referendum on a new constitution.

The new military-backed government is seeking a strong

"yes" vote for the constitution to show the legitimacy of the political transition process put in place after the military removed Morsi on July 3. Brotherhood supporters oppose the new document and have vowed protests against it.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Ousted Egyptian president Mohammed Morsi after a news conference in Cairo in July 2012. MAYA ALLERUZZO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

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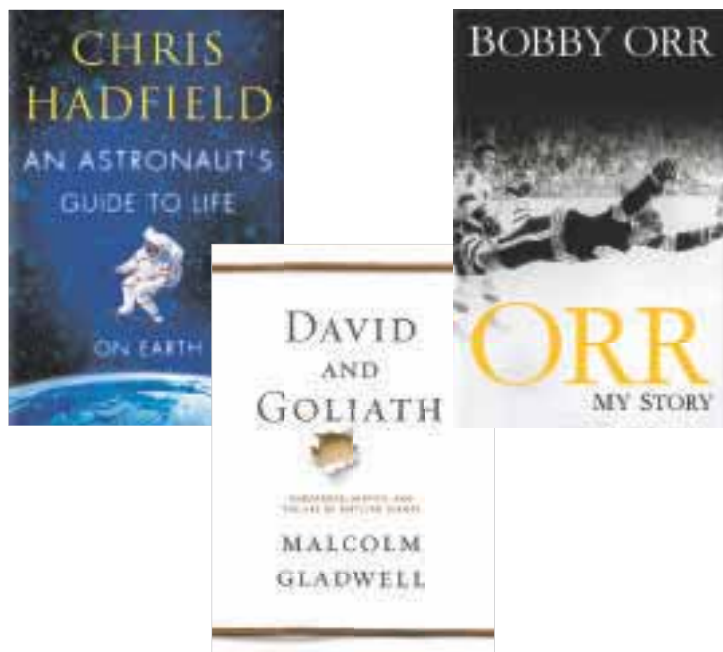
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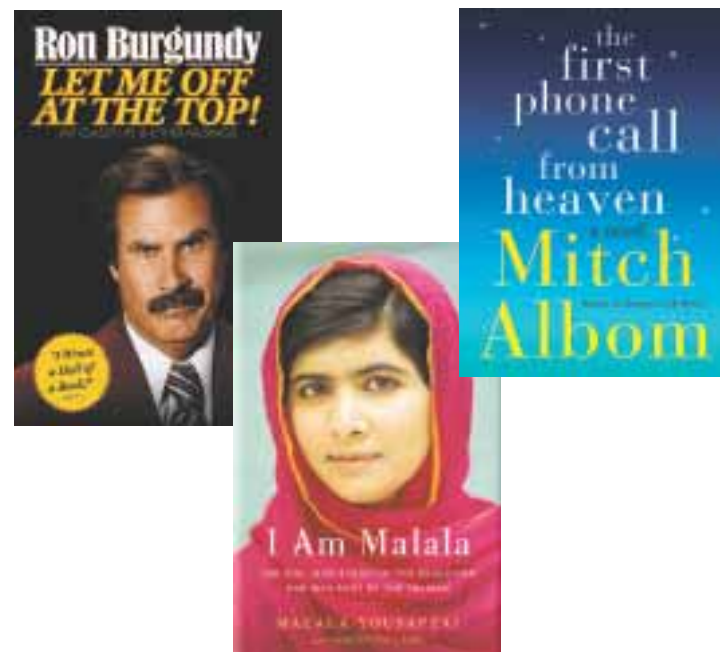
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Russia approves amnesty bill that could free activists

Protesters. The bill could apply to Greenpeace activists and the two jailed members of the Pussy Riot punk band

Russia's parliament on Wednesday passed an amnesty bill that will likely apply to the 30-member crew of a Greenpeace ship detained after an Arctic protest, but it wasn't immediately clear if and when the activists, including two Canadians, would be allowed to leave the country.

A spokesman for Greenpeace said the organization had hoped Paul Ruzicky of Port Colborne, Ont., and Alexandre Paul of Montreal and 28 other activists could return home by Christmas, but

that seems unlikely given the amount of red tape surrounding their release.

At the earliest, they may make it in time to ring in the new year, Diego Creimer told The Canadian Press.

The amnesty, which also would likely free the two jailed members of the Pussy Riot punk band, has been largely viewed as the Kremlin's attempt to soothe criticism of Russia's human rights records ahead of the Winter Olympics in Sochi next year. But opposition lawmakers argued it doesn't go nearly far enough and the complicated legislation appeared to leave many questions open.

The State Duma on Wednesday voted 446-0 in favour of the carefully tailored bill, which mostly applies to those who haven't committed violent crimes, first-time offenders, minors and women with

small children. Lawmakers said they expect about 2,000 people to be released from jail.

The Duma adopted last-minute amendments to the bill to include suspects of hooliganism who are still awaiting trial, a provision that could apply to the crew of a Greenpeace ship facing those charges after their September's protest in the Arctic.

The activists, who spent two months in jail before they were granted bail, were initially accused of piracy but authorities later changed that charge to hooliganism.

The crew members insist the charges against them were bogus. "I might soon be going home to my family, but I should never have been charged and jailed in the first place," the ship's captain Peter Willcox said in a statement. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Still in limbo

Family 'cautiously optimistic'

The sister of one of two Canadian Greenpeace activists facing charges in Russia says she's "cautiously optimistic" that an amnesty bill passed Wednesday in Moscow will apply to them. Patricia Ruzicky Stirling said the news brought some relief from the anxiety that has plagued her family for months, but the tight-knit clan won't celebrate until Paul Ruzicky is back on Canadian soil.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



Greenpeace International activists Philip Ball, left, and Camila Speziale embrace after hearing the Russian parliament passed an amnesty bill that would likely pardon them, in St. Petersburg, Russia, on Wednesday.

DMITRI SHAROMOV/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/GREENPEACE INTERNATIONAL

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Retirement for heroic dog

Too old to guide. Owner doesn't want to part with guide dog who leaped onto subway tracks to save him

Cecil Williams, who has been recovering at a New York City hospital with his guide dog Orlando still by his side, had been slated to get another working dog in January or February to replace the 11-year-old black lab who leaped onto subway tracks after his blind owner lost consciousness and fell off the station platform.

Now, he would ideally like to have two dogs — one working and one retired as a pet — if logistics, physical abilities and finances allow.

If that's not possible, the family that raised Orlando as a puppy says it will be "absolutely thrilled to have him back," said Guiding Eyes for the Blind spokeswoman Michelle Brier. "They're very thrilled their little baby has made such a big difference."



Cecil Williams pets his guide dog, Orlando, in his hospital bed in New York City on Tuesday. JOHN MINCHILLO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Williams said on Tuesday that he couldn't pay for a non-working dog, so he was planning to look for a good home for Orlando. Guiding Eyes provides working dogs for free but cannot cover retired dogs' expenses.

St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center, where Williams is staying, has been fielding queries from well-wishers offering money and other assistance.

Williams said that if he does decide he's able to care for two dogs, he'd need help paying for the lab's care.

The organization was setting up a fund and planned to post information on its website. If it turns out Williams doesn't need the money, it will be used for other guide dogs.

Williams, 61, and Orlando both escaped serious injury Tuesday when they were bumped by a train passing

over them — a miraculous end to a harrowing ordeal that began when Williams felt faint on his way to the dentist.

Witnesses said Orlando barked frantically and tried to stop Williams from tumbling off the platform. Matthew Martin told the New York Post that Orlando leaped onto the tracks as the train approached and kissed Williams to entice him to move.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Australia. Tourist on her phone plunges off pier while browsing Facebook

A woman was walking along a bay in Melbourne on Monday night when she became distracted by her Facebook feed and plummeted off the pier into the chilly water, Victoria state police said.

A witness called for help and police rushed to the woman's aid. They found her flailing around in the water, about 20 metres from the pier.

"She was still out in the water lying on her back in a floating position because she told us later that

she couldn't swim," Senior Constable Dean Kelly of the state water police told the Australian Broadcasting Corp. "She still had her mobile phone in her hand and initially she apologized and said sorry."

The woman was taken to a hospital for treatment.

"With Facebook, or social media in general as far as we're concerned, if you're anywhere near the water just pay attention," Kelly said. "Especially if you can't swim."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Christmas scam

Couple lied about stolen gifts: Cops

A Mississauga, Ont., couple who reported their Christmas gifts stolen — including an iPad for their son who has Down syndrome — have been charged with public mischief.

Peel police allege the pair fabricated the theft.

The man and woman claimed that they had been driving home from the mall on Saturday evening when a sheet of ice smashed their back window, causing their purchases to fly out of the vehicle and then be stolen.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Will regulation bring more choice, lower prices, better service?

David and Goliath.

Feds aim to encourage more wireless providers, leading to better deals for Canadian consumers

Canada's biggest telecom companies are facing a cap on the wireless roaming rates they can charge smaller rivals for using their networks and could face fines for breaking rules that govern the industry.

Industry Minister James Moore announced Wednesday that the government is making legislative changes in an attempt to give consumers more competition in the wireless market, dominated by Rogers, Bell and Telus.

"Currently, high domes-

The Big 3 dominate

Canaccord Genuity analyst Dvai Ghose said the move should help the new wireless companies in theory, but said it's "too little, too late."

- Ghose noted that Wind Mobile's majority owner, Russian telecom VimpelCom, has put its stake up for sale and struggling Mobilicity is operating under creditor protection and is also up for sale. Public Mobile has been sold to Telus.

tic roaming rates hold back many providers, especially new entrants, from offering more choice, lower prices and better service to Canadians," Moore said in a statement.

Ottawa will move to prevent the big wireless providers from charging small wireless companies more than they charge their own customers for domestic roaming. Moore said the rates "can be more than 10 times what they charge their own customers."

Roaming fees are charged when customers use their cellphones outside their own network provider's coverage area.

Rogers, Bell and Telus have large national networks, but smaller providers such as Wind Mobile, Mobilicity, Maritime-based Eastlink and Quebec's Videotron have to negotiate agreements with the Big Three to give their customers service across the country when they travel.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



You spin me right 'round

Assaf Biderman, co-inventor of the Copenhagen Wheel and associate director of the SENSEable City Laboratory at MIT, poses with his invention at Superpedestrian, his venture-backed company in Cambridge, Mass. The startup is launching a new device that transforms almost any bicycle into an electric-hybrid vehicle using an app on a smartphone. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Snail mail

Canada Post head defends cuts, rate hike

The head of Canada Post says the corporation needs to make major changes to stay alive in the digital age. Deepak Chopra defended the Crown agency's proposals to cut service and raise rates, appearing before a Commons committee Wednesday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR
93.55¢ (-0.70¢)

TSX
13,334.73 (+154.57)

OIL
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Natural gas: \$4.27 US (-\$0.02)
Dow Jones: 16,167.97 (+292.71)

Majority rules. Delta Air Lines listens to customers, won't allow phone calls

Delta Air Lines won't allow passengers to make voice calls from its planes.

Right now, federal rules prohibit voice calls on planes. But the government is indicating that it might loosen those rules. If that happens, it could be up to airlines to set their own policies.

On Wednesday, Delta went ahead and said, in effect, hang up and enjoy the view from 40,000 feet.

CEO Richard Anderson told

workers in a memo that the airline will not allow cell calls or internet-based voice communications on mainline or Delta Connection flights, which are operated by other airlines under contract for Delta.

A "clear majority" of customers in a 2012 survey last year said the ability to make voice calls would make their experience worse, not better, Anderson wrote.

Anderson also said Delta employees, particularly flight

Quoted

"Our frequent flyers believe voice calls in the cabin would be a disruption to the travel experience."

Delta's CEO Richard Anderson

crews, are against allowing calls during flights. Atlanta-based Delta is one of the world's biggest airlines. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Virtual currency. China's biggest bitcoin exchange bans yuan deposits

The biggest bitcoin exchange in China said Wednesday that it's no longer accepting yuan deposits, dealing another setback to the virtual currency.

BTC China's announcement on its Twitter-like Sina Weibo account comes two weeks after China's central bank said the country's banks and payments systems were barred from handling the virtual currency.

The exchange said that

"due to the reasons that everyone knows, BTC China has to temporarily stop its yuan account recharging functions."

Account holders can still top up their accounts using bitcoins and withdraw yuan, the exchange said.

The price of bitcoins tumbled after the announcement, sinking as low as \$412 US after starting the day at \$618 US.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

No legal status

The Chinese central bank warned earlier this month that bitcoins don't have any legal status or monetary equivalent and shouldn't be used as currency, adding that financial institutions and payment systems could not sell, trade or store bitcoins.

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TURKEY TROUBLE? LET'S TALK

I think I've finally found my calling — specifically, my turkey calling.

This holiday season, millions of Canadians from coast to coast will spend hours on the painstaking preparation of their Christmas turkey. And I want to take them under my wing.

You probably don't realize this, but I have been certified as the best Metro columnist/turkey preparer who uses my keyboard. And it's not often you hear those sorts of qualifications. In fact, family members and co-workers alike have long said that when they think "turkey" they think "John Mazerolle."

I owe my love and intimate knowledge of turkey to the Internet. Namely, butterball.com, which I can say without hyperbole is the best turkey preparation website I have ever seen this week while preparing for a column that is due in less than an hour.

Butterball's set-up is really something. Did you know they've had a 1-800 talk-line for decades that people can call if they're hav-



HE SAYS

John Mazerolle

metronews.ca

ing turkey trouble?

You call and "turkey experts" help you with what one recent television news report called "your turkey crisis." This is fabulous. I can't count the number of times some turkey-related event has cropped up in my life and I acted like a bird-brain — my prom night/pet turkey "incident," just for starters. And help was only a phone call away.

"Open every November and December, our 50+ experts answer more than 100,000 questions, in both English and Spanish, for thousands of households around the United States and Canada," the website chirps.

What's more, the turkey talk-line call centre even added something special this year for the very first time: Men.

This is where my calling comes in: I want to talk turkey. As a certified turkey expert, I would like to be part of this important and trailblazing team.

For instance, I could explain to guys like me the importance of making sure the bird is not past its best-before date. (In my 20s I had several turkeys I received as Christmas bonuses ruined by two years in the freezer. When the third turkey arrived, the two-year-old bird would get the boot.)

I also believe I could help with the efficiency of those 100,000-plus calls. I can assure you that by about the 300th time I was asked where the meat thermometer goes, I would have several alternative answers at the ready.

Without being sexist, I think I can say men deal with problems in their own special way. I'm sure the women giving thoughtful, detailed instructions over the phone will appreciate the counterpoint of me barking, "What do you mean it won't fit, force it!" and "It's fiine, I'm sure it's fiine. It's probably fine."

I must admit, also, that I like the idea of joining this flock because I assume all-you-can-eat turkey is a job perk. Which will be great for me, because despite my credentials and intimate knowledge of turkey, I've never actually cooked one successfully. White and dark meat, please. And cranberries if you've got them. Gobble gobble.

ZOOM

Glow with the flow



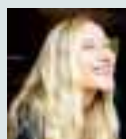
JULIA CUMES/SOLENT NEWS

LED lights added to paddle boards

The dark silhouettes of moonlit paddlers appear to be walking on water. The stand-up paddle boarding enthusiasts took to the water with specially-made LED lights strapped to the bottom of their boards. The surreal image captures the moment Justin Labdon and his team of paddle boarders headed out of a harbour in Dennis, Mass., one night.

METRO

Quoted



"Standing on the jetty photographing down, what I saw was even more beautiful and surreal than I was expecting."

Julia Cumes, 41, photographer based in Cape Cod, Mass.

Sea life attracted to board lights

The LED lights strapped to the bottom of the boards attract fish, including squid, blue fish and big striped bass, says Justin Labdon, owner of Adventure Chatham. Asked by Metro whether the light would entice larger predatory sea life, Labdon replied, "We don't venture out to shark-inhabited areas, but I would assume they might be attracted to the light as well." METRO

LED water sports

- \$300 per LED-lit paddle board.
- AdventureChatham offers night-time paddle boarding excursions when there is a full moon out.
- Paddles with LED lights at the end are being considered as his company's next novelty water sports experience, says Labdon.

Clickbait



IRENE KUAN
irene.kuan@metronews.ca



GETTY IMAGES

If you've yet to complete your Christmas shopping by now, then you're in for a wild ride — looking for a parking spot at the mall that is. A congested parking lot full of drivers with short fuses can turn into a real-life nightmare before Christmas. These apps will make looking for a parking spot the least of your worries during the busy shopping season.

Parkopedia:

This app works on all mobile platforms and is like Wikipedia for parking spaces. The creators have set out to map every parking lot and parking space in the world and so far has data, contributed by users, from 28 countries, covering over 25 million parking spots. The app can give directions to the parking space; provide real-time availability, and prices and payment options for parking.

ParkMe:

ParkMe is an award-winning free app for iOS and Android that works to help you find the cheapest and closest parking spaces by providing the cost of parking before you arrive at your destination and lets you compare options. This app works in the U.S., Canada and in European cities.

Twitter



the real cab issue? Horrible customer service and lack of accountability? #yyc

@metropicks asked: Calgary cabbies are eyeing a puke penalty to cover the cleanup cost. What is a sufficient penalty for puking in a cab?

@Cory_Boehm: A minimum of \$200 seems more than reasonable.

@Canucklehead_ca: So drunk you puke in a cab? I suspect the next morning will present it's own penalty. Maybe two if you have an unknown guest.

@ryanjordandyck: can we get back to

@DeafPoets: I dispatch at an Edmonton company. The going rate for screaming groceries is about \$75, depending on how vile the mess is.

@jpmacnab: I think it is \$50 in Ottawa

@santanapoptarts: barf bags extra large size and \$10 keep it real, but the puker must realize its gross and ur in a cab #poordriver

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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU: Send us your comments: winniepegletters@metronews.ca

Still rock 'n' roll, despite hooley

Greg MacPherson.

Enough with the hyphens already — this guy just wants to make rock music



BACKSTAGE PASS

Jared Story
winipeg@metronews.ca

Greg MacPherson's diverse songwriting style means he's susceptible to sub-genres like "folk-rock," "roots-rock" and the seemingly musically meaningless "indie-rock."

However, the Winnipeg musician's latest album, *Fireball* — released in late October through Disintegration Records — should put an end to all that hyphenated hooley.

"I wanted to make a rock album, just start to finish, something that you can put on in the car and then get somewhere fast," MacPherson said.

Yes, *Fireball* is a straight-up rock record, but that isn't to say it's not as varied as any of MacPherson's eight previous releases. Album opener and lead single 1995 absolutely roars out of the gate, but the title track contains an almost menacing, Stooges-style crawl and the song *Sandhand* is up and down, quiet and loud.

"The best rock 'n' roll music, the best albums I've heard and the best shows I've seen, they're not predictable," MacPherson says. "There's a chance something can go off the rails at any minute, and that's why I like that kind of music. I want a sense of possibility."

MacPherson says he goes into recording with "some serious intent" but his song ideas aren't so fleshed out



MacPherson releases his new studio album, *Fireball* at Union Sound Hall on Sunday night. CONTRIBUTED

Quoted

"I wanted to make a rock album, just start to finish, something that you can put on in the car and then get somewhere fast."

Greg MacPherson

that there's no room for adventure.

"I've been asked to teach songwriter courses for high school kids and I always quote this move called *Zero Effect*," MacPherson says. "Bill Pullman and Ben Stiller are private detectives and Pullman's character is explaining his

method and he says 'If you go into a room looking for one clue, your chances of finding that specific clue are very slim, but if you go into a room looking for anything helpful, your chances of finding something interesting are pretty good.'

"If you go into your song-

writing or performances or record with the idea in mind that you don't have an end goal so much, but just the process itself, your imagination can let loose and you can come up with stuff that might surprise you."

MacPherson said *Fireball* is full of said artistic freedom.

"On this record I think you'll hear people having a good time, taking risks, maybe pushing themselves further than they would normally," MacPherson says.

"That kind of excitement or danger is there and that's the thing I'm most proud of."

Show details

Greg MacPherson releases *Fireball* at Union Sound Hall on Sunday.

- **Openers.** Rob Crooks and DJ No Contact.
- **Tickets.** \$20 at Music Trader, Urban Bakery and ticketworkshop.com. Showtime is 8 p.m.
- **Showtime.** 8 p.m.

visit metronews.ca

There are holiday flicks and then there are flicks set during the holidays. Two very different things, each offering their own twist on all the naughty and nice things the season has to offer.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



In Bruges

You'd have to pay attention to realize this dark comedy actually takes place during the holiday season — the only references are casual asides and the occasional shot of Christmas decorations in the background. And the plot itself is hardly cheer-filled: It centres on two hitmen, played by Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson, who are sent to Belgium to lay low after an especially messy job.

5

Non-festive holiday flicks



The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo

This is hardly holiday fare, unless you count perverse family dysfunction as a key hallmark of your seasonal gatherings. The horrors in this dark thriller kick off several days before Dec. 25 and unfold through a bitterly cold Scandinavian winter. It centres on a dogged journalist, played by Michael Nyqvist in the 2009 Swedish-language version and Daniel Craig in the 2011 remake, who traces the decades-old disappearance of a young woman with the help of a tattooed hacker, originally played by Noomi Rapace and later by Rooney Mara.



Iron Man 3

Writer/director Shane Black clearly has a thing about Christmas. Many of his flicks — including Iron Man 3 — take place during the holiday season, among them Lethal Weapon, The Last Boy Scout, The Long Kiss Goodnight and Kiss Kiss Bang Bang. There's something about a Christmas setting that ably unites varied characters and pulls together a sprawling storyline while driving home key plot points, while blowing stuff up, of course.



Goodfellas

This Martin Scorsese classic makes the cut by way of the fact it spans several decades and therefore includes a holiday-themed scene, and it is a doozy featuring Robert De Niro's trademark intensity: After a lucrative heist leaves the mobsters flush with cash, some arrive at a holiday party flaunting the spoils, sending De Niro's pragmatic Jimmy into a fury for attracting unwanted attention.



About a Boy

The holiday schmaltz sneaks up on you in this Hugh Grant romantic comedy about a self-absorbed bachelor who is more humbug than ho-ho-ho. Until he befriends a young boy and the boy's suicidal mum, of course, and gradually learns there's more to life than hook-ups and his posh hipster toys. Added holiday points come from the fact Grant's character lives on royalties from his father's song Santa's Super Sleigh.

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Is this what he's been hustling for?

American Hustle.

Director David O. Russell says all his filmmaking has led up to this movie

Given director David O. Russell's recent track record, it's no surprise expectations are high for his latest holiday release, *American Hustle*.

The sprawling star-packed thriller — the followup to last year's Oscar-winning crowd-pleaser *Silver Linings Playbook* — heads to Canadian theatres this weekend after making it onto a slew of critics' best-of-2013 lists and garnering key early awards nominations.

Russell demurs any suggestion the 1970s-set *American Hustle* could be on the same buzz-laden Oscar track as his 2012 feel-good romance starring Jennifer Lawrence and Bradley Cooper, or the Oscar run enjoyed by his brutal 2010 holiday release, *The Fighter*, with Christian Bale and Amy Adams.



American Hustle opens Friday. CONTRIBUTED

But he does admit his brazen, fictionalized take on the Abscam tale marks a new career benchmark, which he credits in large part to the bonds it cements with returning players Bale, Cooper, Adams and Lawrence, each featured in radically different roles.

"They understand the world

they're in and then they can all channel that dream and it allows magical things to happen.... that's what this is," Russell said in a recent interview from New York, describing his core cast as "collaborators" in his vision. "And this didn't happen to me before in my filmmaking — I feel like all my

filmmaking was sort of leading up to this work."

An outlandish no-holds-barred spirit pervades the hair-obsessed, sequin-adorned world of *American Hustle*, where an array of hustlers scheme and plot their way to dreams of love and respect. It's loosely inspired by an actual FBI sting that net-

ted members of Congress for accepting bribes from a fake Arab sheik, but veers in wild directions as it explores desperate people hungry for acceptance.

Bale is nearly unrecognizable as pot-bellied con man Irving Rosenfeld, who is forced to help Cooper's wild FBI agent Richie DiMaso in an increas-

Quoted

"The film is really about reinvention and survival"

Director David O. Russell on what interested Christian Bale about this project

ingly reckless scheme to nab corrupt politicians and casino-skimming mobsters.

Russell says he and Bale sketched their ideas about Irving, a character inspired by a real con man named Melvin Weinberg, in Bale's backyard in Los Angeles about a year ago.

"The film is really about reinvention and survival and that was the larger idea that really interested Christian Bale and me while we were in his backyard — it was not any kind of cynical story but (rather) a very soulful story about people who loved life and loved each other but were facing some enormous predicament," he says, drawing comparisons to the conflicted characters of *Silver Linings Playbook* and *The Fighter*.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Bruce Willis ALL IMAGES GETTY

Willis and wife expecting baby number two

Bruce Willis is reportedly set to be a father once again, with wife Emma Heming expecting the couple's second child, according to Us Weekly. Willis and Hem-

ing are also parents to one-year-old daughter Mabel, while Willis also has three daughters — Rumer, Scout and Tallulah — with ex-wife Demi Moore.



Kelly LeBrock

LeBrock arrested for driving under the influence

Weird Science star Kelly LeBrock was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence following a routine traffic stop in Santa Barbara last month, according to E! News. The model and actress — famous for her “don’t hate me because I’m

beautiful” Pantene ads from the ‘80s — failed to stop at a stop sign and was exceeding the speed limit and straddling the double yellow line when cops pulled her over. She then reportedly failed field sobriety tests and was arrested “without incident.”

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word



Lawrence condemns fat insults

Jennifer Lawrence is going on the offensive when it comes to Hollywood's warped body image standards. “I just think it should be illegal to call somebody fat on TV,” the

star tells Barbara Walters in an interview. “Because why is humiliating people funny? I get it, and I do it too, we all do it. But I think when it comes to the media, the media needs to take responsibility for the effect that it has on our younger generation, on these girls who are watching these television shows and picking up how to talk and how to be cool.”



Julia Roberts

Roberts did not relish a bit of rough and tumble with Streep

Surprisingly, Julia Roberts didn't relish the opportunity to tackle Meryl Streep and wrestle her to the carpet in August: *Osage County*, she revealed during a post-premiere Q & A. “I didn't look forward to it,” Roberts says. “It's not how I saw the dream of my time with Meryl Streep. But she was a worthy opponent. She was

not going down without some scratches and some heels in thighs.” And while there were stunt personnel on hand to help the actresses, Roberts handled her tackling herself, apparently. “Julia didn't need a stunt double because she's plenty tough,” Streep says.



Twitter



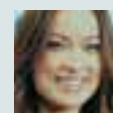
@Johncusack

So good to check back in with CNN every few years — Piers Morgan in a fiery debate with Ann Coulter whether Santa is white



@JuddApatow

When someone says there was too much marketing of *Anchorman 2* I usually say 'you go up against *The Hobbit* without marketing. FU grandma!



@oliviawilde

I broke into @jayleno's dressing room and stole one of his jackets for my fetus.



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Their style is in the stars

Forget trying to break your giftees down into the usual gift guide categories of personality type or price. We spoke to identical twin sisters Tali and Ophira Edut, a.k.a. The AstroTwins, to find out what each star sign typically desires when it comes to the season of goodwill.

METRO WORLD NEWS

Aries

"As a fire sign, Aries are very competitive. They rule the head and are always thinking of ways to improve their lives. So accessories that draw attention and frame the face, like hats, earrings and makeup, would be good options."

Maison Michel boater \$616, net-a-porter.com



Taurus

"The bull likes items that are practical and durable. They want luxury things that are built to last. Purposeful items, like pajamas and shoes, with an understated design will work best for this Earth sign."

Frends Layla leather and rose gold headphones \$214, net-a-porter.com



Gemini

"Those born under this air sign are very eclectic. They have a bit of a wacky, boho style. Channel the Olsen twins and you won't go wrong. They're very curious and love to explore. Opt for natural fabrics and fruity fragrances for bonus points."



Ilse Jacobsen lace up wellies \$164, gift-library.com

Libra

"Libras love presents that look pretty. They have a very girly sense of style, so opt for jewellery or chocolates that are decadent and have a beautiful aesthetic. Try cosmetics that feel indulgent rather than just practical."



Laura Mercier almond coconut milk honey bath \$51, johnlewis.com

Scorpio

"The most sensual of the signs, Scorpios love to embrace a dramatic atmosphere. Choose items that are dark and indulgent. They have expensive taste and love exclusives."

Elle Macpherson Intimates lace bra \$57, net-a-porter.com



Sagittarius

"Ruled by the sun, Sagittarians are always on the go. They love bold colour patterns, especially citrus combinations. As they travel a lot, items that make plane rides and road trips easier or more fun would be good options."



Lotus Wei Pure Energy mist \$48, beingcontent.com

Cancer

"The home is where Cancers feel most comfortable. They have an almost grandmotherly style, which extends to their wardrobe too. Pearls, old fashioned prints and pastel colours suit them best."

Penhaligon's Bluebell eau de toilette \$140, penhaligons.com



Leo

"Big, bold and outgoing sums up this fire sign. Leos are very outgoing and love to socialize. So look for gifts that have a cool and unusual pattern or anything with dazzling embellishments."

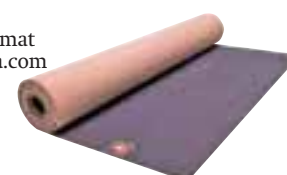


Marc by Marc Jacobs tablet case \$40.60, shopbop.com

Virgo

"They are worriers and extremely neurotic. Anything that encourages relaxation and sends them a subtle sign that they need to unwind and calm down would be good. Choose things in pretty colours that are soothing."

eKO lite yoga mat \$48, manduka.com



Capricorn

"An Earth sign that loves luxury items — but only if they are built to last. Capricorns want good quality items with a minimalist design. Although, they sound hard to please they are, in fact, very down to earth and adore practical presents."

Leather wrap gloves \$64, stories.com



Aquarius

"Those with the eleventh sign are gypsies at heart. Anything that embraces their boho, wacky style would be warmly welcomed especially colourful jewellery and bold prints."



Lucy Folk silver taco bracelet \$115, matches-fashion.com

Pisces

"The most dreamy and mystical of the signs, Pisceans adore anything that embraces this side of their personality. Good options include natural and precious materials that help towards creating a serene atmosphere or channeling positive vibes."

Essential oil soy wax candle \$30, bsabcandles.com



No need to be bitter if the eggplant sandwiches turn out a little cheesy

Ingredients

4 portions

- 1 whole egg
- 2 tbsp water or 2% milk
- 1 cup seasoned dry bread crumbs
- 3 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- 3 tbsp grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tsp minced fresh garlic
- 10 slices of eggplant, skin on
- 3/4 cup tomato sauce
- 1/2 cup shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan



ROSE REISMAN
for more, visit
rosereisman.com

Eggplant, a healthy vegetable, is often loaded with fat and calories from the amount of oil used in frying or sautéing it.

This baked version omits the oil, and it turns out great! Purchase fresh young eggplant; when overripe, it becomes bitter. If the skin doesn't spring back when pressed, then it's too old.

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C). Spray a large baking sheet with cooking oil

2. Whisk the egg with the water in a small bowl. Combine the bread crumbs, parsley, Parmesan and garlic on a plate, mixing well. Dip the eggplant in the egg mixture, then coat with the bread crumb mixture. Place on the

Cheesy Eggplant Sandwiches



A delicious combination of eggplant and cheese. ROSE REISMAN

prepared pan. Bake, turning once, for 20 minutes or until tender.

3. Spread half of the tomato sauce in a large casserole

dish. Place 5 eggplant slices over top. Top each with remaining tomato sauce. Add half the mozzarella cheese and top with remaining eggplant slices. Top with remain-

ing mozzarella and Parmesan. Bake for five minutes or until the cheese is melted.

Preparation time 10 minutes
Cooking time 25 minutes

Mind the App

How to make Substitutions



MIND THE APP
Kris Abel
@RealKrisAbel
life@metronews.ca

iPhone/iPad \$0.99

Holiday meals can be tricky with guests who have allergies or special needs. This handy reference will help you pick out replacement ingredients without changing recipes or abandoning family traditions.



Do something original with those sweet potato recipes

Sweet potatoes generally get one of three treatments at the dinner table. They are mashed like regular potatoes; they are roasted like squash, or they are saturated with sugar until they no longer resemble a vegetable. This is a nice alternative.

Heat the oven to 400 F. Poke the sweet potatoes all over with a fork.

Place the sweet potatoes directly on the oven's centre rack and bake for 1 hour, or until completely tender.

While the sweet potatoes cook, steam the cauliflower. Set a steamer basket in a medium saucepan with 1/2 inch of water.

Place the saucepan over medium-high heat and add the cauliflower to the steamer basket. Cover and cook until the cauliflower is very tender, about 15 minutes. Remove the cauliflower from the steamer and set aside.

When the sweet potatoes are baked, let them cool until easily handled.

Ingredients

- 4 large sweet potatoes
- 16 ounces cauliflower florets, fresh or frozen
- 4 tablespoons butter, divided
- Zest of 1 orange
- Salt and ground black pepper
- 1 cup shredded Parmesan

Peel the sweet potatoes, then place the flesh in a large bowl.

Add 3 tablespoons of the butter and the orange zest, then mash well. Season with salt and pepper, cover the bowl and set aside.

Place the steamed cauliflower and the remaining 1 tablespoon of butter in the food processor. Process until pureed.

Add the Parmesan, then pulse to combine. Add



Orange sweet potatoes swirled with Parmesan cauliflower puree. HANDOUT

the cauliflower puree to the sweet potatoes, using a spoon to swirl the two

together without completely mixing them. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Recipe. Grilled mango and brie quesadillas



In a small bowl, combine mango, jalapeno, onion and cilantro. Add lime juice, mixing well to combine. (Make ahead: Prepare mango salsa up to 2 hours in advance. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate.)

Divide brie evenly among tortillas, laying it on the lower half. Divide mango salsa evenly on top of brie. Fold each tortilla in half.

Preheat contact grill. (If your contact grill has more than one temperature setting, set it to high.)

Spray both sides of contact grill with vegetable cooking spray or oil. Place quesadillas on grill with folded side closest to front edge. (This prevents cheese from running down into the drip tray.)

Close lid. Grill for 2 to 3 minutes or until golden

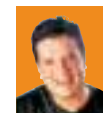
Ingredients

- 1 mango, peeled and chopped
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and minced
- 50 ml (1/4 cup) minced red onion
- 50 ml (1/4 cup) chopped fresh cilantro
- Juice of 1 lime
- 250 g (8 oz) brie, thinly sliced
- 8 tortillas (25 cm/10 inches in diameter)

brown and crisp. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Mid-century mash-up

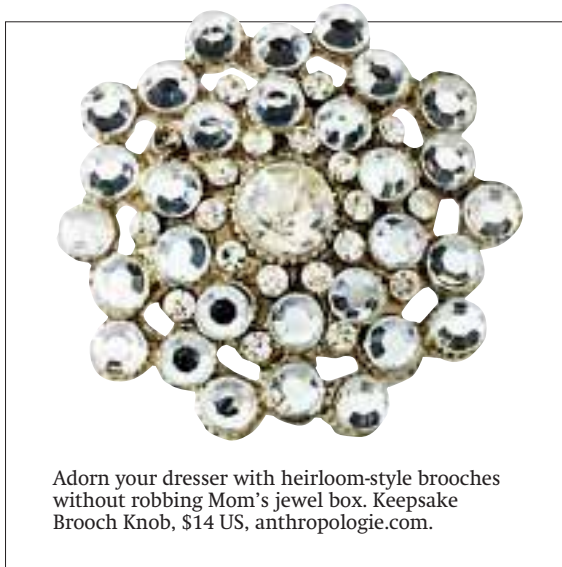
The 1950s and '60s have offered up a lot of home-decor inspiration over the past year — anything retro or vintage-influenced is hot-hot-hot. The look is a mishmash of past design that can encompass a trip to the parental basement or a hunt through a vintage shop, and retailers have cleverly channelled it. Here are some trendy and stylish products to transport you back to a Mad Men era.



DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca



Shiny citrus tones against deep grey stoneware lends retro style to dinner parties. Verte Dinnerware 16-piece set, \$79, urbanbarn.com.



Adorn your dresser with heirloom-style brooches without robbing Mom's jewel box. Keepsake Brooch Knob, \$14 US, anthropologie.com.



Save your quarters with this modernized pay phone and savings bank all in one; the perfect wall phone for calling a taxi. Crosley Vintage Style Pay Telephone, \$90, sears.ca.



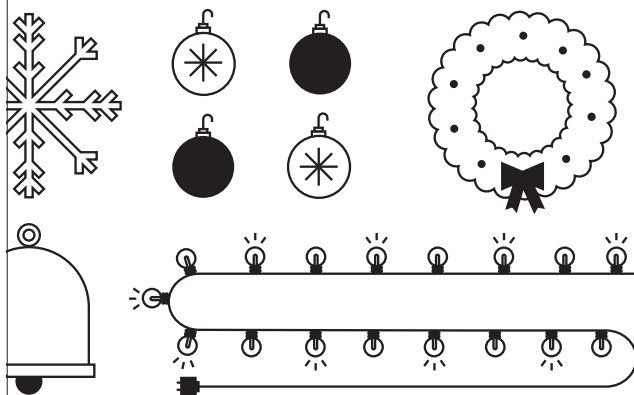
Light up your chandelier in true '70s style. 25-watt Chandelier Light Bulb set of four, \$24 US, urbanoutfitters.com.



Inspired by late '50s Danish mid-century design; open and airy for a light look. Patrik Accent Chair, \$1,600, thebay.com.



Straight out of Granny's china cabinet, fanciful flatware dresses up a modern table. Flores Flatware, from \$7 per piece, zarahome.com.



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at glasshouse,
the city puts up
your christmas
lights**

**skylofts from
\$174,900**

glasshouse
skylofts in the city
glasshousewinnipeg.com



NHL

Blues sign Steen to three-year, \$17.4M deal

The St. Louis Blues have agreed to a \$17.4-million US, three-year contract extension with forward Alex Steen.

Steen has 22 goals and 14 assists in 33 games this season. The 22 goals are tied for second in the NHL, trailing only Alex Ovechkin of the Washington Capitals.

His 36 points are good for ninth in the league.

The 29-year-old Winnipeg-born Swede was set to be an unrestricted free agent this summer. Instead, he'll have a cap hit of \$5.8 million over the next three seasons.

His start this season represented a breakout performance.

He scored 20 goals in his first 24 games in 2013-14, becoming the fastest player in franchise history to reach that plateau since Brett Hull in 1990-91.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NHL

Jets send Albert back to St. John's

The Winnipeg Jets have re-assigned forward John Albert to the St. John's IceCaps of the American Hockey League.

Albert, 24, appeared in his first NHL game and scored his first goal on Dec. 2 versus the New York Rangers. He did not get another point during his eight-game stint with the Jets.

Albert has three goals and five assists in 23 games with St. John's this season.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Time to hammer in the for sale sign



THE HOCKEY NEWS
Matt Larkin
winipeg@metronews.ca

What are the Winnipeg Jets? Nothing if not consistently inconsistent, a team that has seemingly alternated victories from one game to the next since it returned to Manitoba for the start of the 2011-12 season. Over the last month, Winnipeg lost three straight home games, then went 4-2 on a six-game road trip, then lost three more in a row at home, then won once and lost once on a two-game road trip. A team just doesn't get more schizophrenic than that.

An optimist can say at least the Jets are not Buffalo or Edmonton, but I disagree. In today's NHL, you're often better off at the extreme bottom or extreme top. Powerhouses like Chicago, Pittsburgh and Los Angeles all spent several seasons at the bottom of the league amassing high first-round picks to build around. At least Edmonton — well, maybe not Edmonton, but at least Buffalo — can feel happy that the rebuild is beginning the right way.

But what of the Jets? If this team stays mired in purgatory, flirting with ninth in its conference again and again, it is actually further from winning a Stanley Cup than the worst team in the league. That's why, in 2014, Mark Chipman and Kevin Cheveldayoff's resolution should be to make bold moves one way or another. Push aggressively to improve and make the play-



The Jets are starting to look like a franchise destined to be middling, so maybe it's time to deal away talent such as Evander Kane to start the rebuild for the future. PAUL BERESWILL/GETTY IMAGES

offs or admit this team isn't good enough and accelerate a rebuild.

For those who want playoff hockey sooner, the Jets need a few pieces to get better. A goaltending rental like Ryan Miller or Jonas Hiller would help, as would a scorer like Thomas Vanek, but any deal for a marquee player like that puts the Jets well over the salary cap. This team has less than \$1 million in space until the cap expands this summer and simply isn't positioned for a major upgrade.

With the Jets already 10 points out of eighth, I'd be strongly tempted to go the other way and sell off what veteran assets don't have no-trade clauses. Plenty of teams in need of depth could use gritty defenceman Mark Stuart, secondary (tertiary?) scorer Devin Setoguchi or checker Michael Frolik at the deadline and all have expiring contracts. The Flyers have been linked to Dustin Byfuglien in trade rumors before; maybe the Jets see if he wants to waive his no-trade. It would

free up a big chunk of cap space and the Jets can build around Jacob Trouba and Josh Morrissey on defence. A far-fetched option: Move Evander Kane, who doesn't have a no-trade. I still love this kid as a player, but his relationship with the city isn't the best and you can still get the moon for him in a trade.

Would a firesale in Winnipeg be depressing? Sure, in the short term, but isn't the prospect of change less depressing than staying on the playoff bubble forever?

Juniors denied Rielly's service for Sweden



Morgan Rielly scored his first NHL goal in the Leafs' 3-1 loss on Monday in Pittsburgh. GENE J. PUSKAR/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Team Canada's defence — and its potential leadership core — took a bit of a body blow on Wednesday with word that the Maple Leafs intend to keep 19-year-old defenceman Morgan Rielly in the NHL.

There had been hope from Hockey Canada that the Leafs would loan the rookie to the world junior entry that is currently in camp in Copenhagen preparing for the tournament that begins on Boxing Day in Malmö, Sweden.

"Disappointment for sure," Scott Salmond, Hockey Can-

ada's director of player personnel, told TSN. "Yeah, it was a long shot, but we were hopeful."

The Leafs' decision at least adds certainty for both Rielly and the Leafs but it puts the focus more squarely on the eight — mostly inexperienced — defencemen in camp for Team Canada.

Rielly played last year — played well — and would have been a candidate for captain.

As things stand, only three players are returning from last year's squad: Forward Jonathan

Drouin, defenceman Griffin Reinhart and goalie Jake Paterson. Paterson didn't play last year as Canada's third goalie. Drouin is skating after suffering a concussion a few days before Team Canada opened camp.

Reinhart comes with baggage: He must still serve three games of a suspension he incurred last year, meaning he won't be available until the last game of the preliminary round.

That means Canada will start with a defensive core that has no U20 experience.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Reigning skeleton champ at risk of missing Olympics

Jon Montgomery.

Vancouver gold medallist in tough to earn Canada's final men's position at Winter Games

The man who gave the host country one of its most memorable moments of the 2010 Winter Olympics faces long odds to compete at the next Winter Games.

Jon Montgomery's gold medal in skeleton at the Whistler Sliding Centre and his subsequent auctioning off of a pitcher of beer in the village square elevated him to folk-hero status.

But the 34-year-old from Russell, Man., might not make

Quoted



"I know I created the bed I'm sleeping in, but I'm only disappointed. Disappointed is fleeting. Regret is lasting."

Jon Montgomery doesn't regret taking off the 2011-12 season or the move to a new sled, which hasn't translated into success on the track.

the 2014 team for Sochi, Russia, in February.

Montgomery's results the last season and a half have yet to meet Bobsleigh Canada Skeleton's qualification criteria.

He needs to hit the ball out of the park and also have a little luck in the four races he has left to qualify before Jan. 19.

"Unfortunately for me, I'm fighting an uphill battle in that regard," Montgomery said Wednesday in Calgary.

Mellisa Hollingsworth of Eckville, Alta., Calgary's Sarah

Reid and John Fairbairn and Eric Neilson of Kelowna, B.C., were introduced Wednesday as Canada's skeleton athletes for Sochi.

Canada can qualify a third man and a third woman for Sochi in January, according to head coach Duff Gibson. Should Canada gain those berths, Montgomery is up against Dave Greszczyszyn of Burlington, Ont., for the final spot on the men's team. It will come down to points earned in races.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Boston	34	23	9	2	94	70	48
Montreal	36	21	12	3	91	76	45
Tampa Bay	34	20	11	3	93	82	43
Detroit	36	15	12	9	91	99	39
Toronto	36	17	16	3	99	105	37
Ottawa	36	14	16	6	101	118	34
Florida	35	13	17	5	81	110	31
Buffalo	34	8	23	3	59	98	19

METROPOLITAN DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Pittsburgh	35	24	10	1	108	75	49
Washington	34	18	13	3	107	102	39
Carolina	34	14	13	7	79	94	35
Philadelphia	34	15	15	4	81	93	34
New Jersey	35	14	15	6	83	87	34
NY Rangers	34	16	17	1	76	91	33
Columbus	34	14	16	4	87	95	32
NY Islanders	35	9	19	7	85	121	25

Wednesday's results

New Jersey 5 Ottawa 2
Pittsburgh at NY Rangers
Tuesday's results
Boston 2 Calgary 0
Buffalo 4 Winnipeg 2
Tampa Bay 3 NY Islanders 2 (SO)

Florida 3 Toronto 1
Anaheim 5 Detroit 2
Montreal 3 Phoenix 1
Philadelphia 5 Washington 2
Minnesota 3 Vancouver 2 (SO)
San Jose 4 St. Louis 2
Chicago 3 Nashville 1
Dallas 3 Colorado 2
Los Angeles 3 Edmonton 0

Thursday's games

All Times Eastern
Phoenix at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Minnesota at Pittsburgh, 7 p.m.
Boston at Buffalo, 7 p.m.
Columbus at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Calgary at Detroit, 7:30 p.m.
Nashville at Tampa Bay, 7:30 p.m.
Florida at Ottawa, 7:30 p.m.
Montreal at St. Louis, 8 p.m.
Vancouver at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.
Edmonton at Colorado, 9:30 p.m.
San Jose at Los Angeles, 10:30 p.m.

WESTERN CONFERENCE

CENTRAL DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Chicago	37	25	7	5	138	102	55
St. Louis	33	22	7	4	114	80	48
Colorado	33	22	10	1	96	78	45
Minnesota	36	20	11	5	84	83	45
Dallas	33	16	12	5	95	101	37
Nashville	34	16	15	3	78	95	35
Winnipeg	36	15	16	5	95	106	35

PACIFIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Anaheim	36	24	7	5	116	91	53
Los Angeles	35	23	8	4	97	68	50
San Jose	34	21	7	6	112	84	48
Vancouver	36	20	10	6	100	86	46
Phoenix	33	18	10	5	105	103	41
Calgary	34	13	16	5	86	108	31
Edmonton	36	11	22	3	93	123	25

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Friday's games

Anaheim at New Jersey, 7 p.m.
Washington at Carolina, 7 p.m.
NY Islanders at NY Rangers, 7 p.m.
Florida at Winnipeg, 8 p.m.
Vancouver at Chicago, 8 p.m.

Saturday's games

Calgary at Pittsburgh, 1 p.m.
Phoenix at Ottawa, 2 p.m.
Colorado at Los Angeles, 4 p.m.
Montreal at Nashville, 7 p.m.
Anaheim at NY Islanders, 7 p.m.
Carolina at Tampa Bay, 7 p.m.
Buffalo at Boston, 7 p.m.
Detroit at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Philadelphia at Columbus, 7 p.m.
New Jersey at Washington, 7 p.m.
St. Louis at Edmonton, 10 p.m.
Dallas at San Jose, 10:30 p.m.

SCORING LEADERS

	G	A	Pts
Crosby, Pgh	19	28	47
Kane, Chi	20	26	46
Malkin, Pgh	9	32	41
Getzlaf, Ana	16	23	39
Ovechkin, Wash	28	10	38
Tavares, NYI	13	25	38
Perry, Ana	22	15	37

Not including last night's games

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Indiana	20	5	.800	—
d-Miami	19	6	.760	1
Atlanta	14	12	.538	6 ^{1/2}
d-Boston	12	15	.444	9
Detroit	13	14	.481	8
Charlotte	12	14	.462	8 ^{1/2}
Washington	11	13	.458	8 ^{1/2}
Chicago	9	14	.391	10
Toronto	9	14	.391	10
Cleveland	9	15	.375	10 ^{1/2}
Brooklyn	9	16	.360	11
Orlando	8	18	.308	12 ^{1/2}
New York	7	17	.292	12 ^{1/2}
Philadelphia	7	19	.269	13 ^{1/2}
Milwaukee	5	19	.208	14 ^{1/2}

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Portland	22	4	.846	—
Oklahoma City	20	4	.833	1
d-San Antonio	19	5	.792	2
d-L.A. Clippers	17	9	.654	5
Houston	16	9	.640	5 ^{1/2}
Phoenix	14	9	.609	6 ^{1/2}
Denver	14	10	.583	7
Dallas	14	10	.583	7
Golden State	14	12	.538	8
Minnesota	12	13	.480	9 ^{1/2}
L.A. Lakers	12	13	.480	9 ^{1/2}
New Orleans	11	12	.478	9 ^{1/2}
Memphis	10	14	.417	11
Sacramento	7	17	.292	14
Utah	7	21	.250	16

x - clinched playoff berth; y - division; z - conference.

Wednesday's results

Utah 86 Orlando 82
Charlotte 104 Toronto 102 OT
Miami 97 Indiana 94
Atlanta 124 Sacramento 107
Detroit 107 Boston 106
Washington 113 Brooklyn 107
New York at Milwaukee
Portland at Minnesota
Memphis at Dallas
San Antonio at Phoenix
Chicago at Houston
New Orleans at L.A. Clippers
Thursday's games
Chicago at Oklahoma City, 8 p.m.
San Antonio at Golden State, 10:30 p.m.

GOOD TIMES ROLL.

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BEFORE OR AFTER THE GAME...
GREAT FOOD, SLOT MACHINES,
BLACKJACK & ROULETTE
ARE JUST STEPS AWAY.

REMEMBER...
KEEP IT A GAME.

Horoscopes

Aries

March 21 - April 20

You may have lots of big ideas in your mind but are you ever going to get around to turning them into something useful, something that makes a difference both to yourself and to others?

Taurus

April 21 - May 21

You may resent having to pay for something you think you should get for free but if you make a scene you may end up paying even more.

Gemini

May 22 - June 21

Partnerships of all kinds have been under the spotlight of late and will remain so until the Sun moves out of your opposite sign this weekend.

Cancer

June 22 - July 23

It may seem as if someone is trying to undermine your position, and maybe they are, but there is no need to worry about it.

Leo

July 24 - Aug. 23

You have been in impressive form of late but all good things must come to an end and life may not be quite so easy when the Sun changes signs on the 21st. If there is anything of a creative nature that needs doing then do it now.

Virgo

Aug. 24 - Sept. 23

If you feel the need to kiss and make up with a partner or relative now is the time. If you leave it much longer you may find that it isn't so easy or, worse, that they have found the love they need with someone else.

Libra

Sept. 24 - Oct. 23

What happens over the next few days will help you to understand that your priorities are wrong, that you are worrying about the things you cannot change while neglecting the things you can.

Scorpio

Oct. 24 - Nov. 22

Slow things right down and take stock of how far you have come, because only then will you be in a position to decide how far you still have to go.

Sagittarius

Nov. 23 - Dec. 21

The Sun remains in your sign only until Saturday, so get busy and get as much done as you can between now and then.

Capricorn

Dec. 22 - Jan. 20

When the Sun moves into your sign this weekend a new solar year begins. Make it your objective, today and tomorrow, to look back over the past 12 months and learn what you can from your mistakes.

Aquarius

Jan. 21 - Feb. 19

Spend as much time as you can with your friends today because you may not get so many opportunities to be sociable in the days and weeks to follow.

Pisces

Feb. 20 - March 20

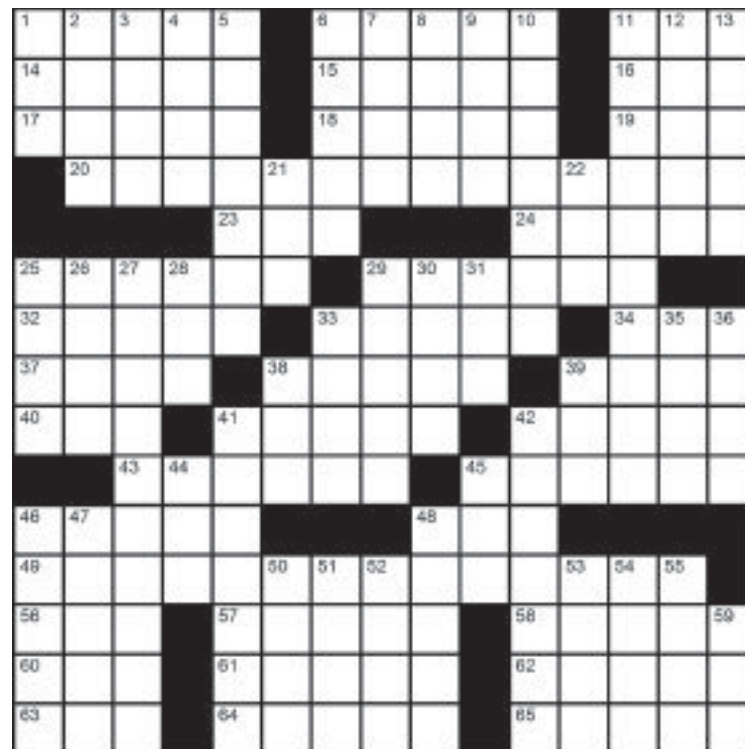
You need to convince those in positions of power that you deserve to be given more responsibility and the rewards that go with it. Timing is everything and the right time is now.

SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

Across

1. Tropical nut
6. ____ behold!
11. "Pick a Puppy" channel
14. "ER" actress Ms. Tierney
15. Ewoks' forest moon home
16. Not 'neath
17. 'Material' suffix
18. Invest
19. San Francisco's ____ Valley
20. Prospector in "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer": 2 wds.
23. ____Jongg
24. Actor's tucked-into-shoes devices
25. Country songstress, ____ Lynne
29. Sidekick to #20-Across
32. Birchbark craft
33. Range
34. NHL official
37. With a flair for crafts
38. Lyrical lament
39. Bygone time
40. Golfer's gadget
41. Partake in Winter fun
42. "...not a creature was stirring, not even a ____"
43. Prince ____, British Columbia
45. Awakens
46. "The Birds" (1963) star Ms. Hedren
48. Highway topping
49. They're on the



- Canadian side at Niagara: 2 wds.
56. Pasta names suffix
57. Environment Minister, Ms. Aglukkaq
58. Donald Trump's first wife
60. '____' for Rimouski
61. Gourmand

62. 'frisco footballer
63. Actor, Daniel ____ Kim
64. Skirt alternative
65. Kind of duck

Down

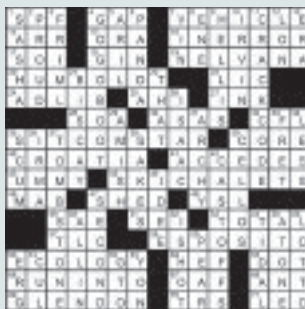
1. Dieter's stat.
2. Simple

3. Ballet outfit
4. Mr. Estrada
5. Alberta city between Red Deer and Edmonton
6. Bloodsucker
7. Never, ____ occasion
8. Env. info

9. Morning's follower
10. Phys. of 1969 to 1976 TV: 2 wds.
11. Like many a Christmas Tree
12. "Count ____" (I don't want to participate)
13. Lock of hair

21. "Nope."
22. Rap music's Kim
25. Hightail it
26. Tortoise's competitor
27. Hamlet in the Northwest Territories
28. Actress Myrna
29. "Grace Under Fire" star Ms. Butler
30. Try to persuade
31. Vachon treat, ____ West
33. Wing-like
35. Poet's 'previously'
36. Charges
38. Just manage, ____ out
39. Particular pronoun
41. Said one's lengthy piece
42. Banff National Park: ____ Lake, it's glacier-fed
44. Sit-____ (Exercises)
45. UK military service
46. Race place
47. Ancient Greek colony
48. "____ are Not Enough" by Northern Lights
50. Singe
51. Table d'____ (Fixed price restaurant menu)
52. Threes - twos = whats?
53. Old Rome's 57
54. Ground
55. Dagger
59. ETA part, for short

Yesterday's Crossword

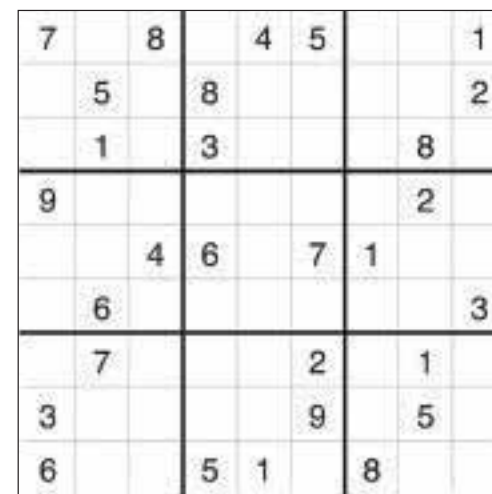


Sudoku

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

Yesterday's Sudoku



Weather

TODAY



MAX: -21°
MIN: -23°

FRIDAY



MAX: -24°
MIN: -27°

SATURDAY



MAX: -22°
MIN: -29°



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